

News

500-Pound Man, 88-Year-Old War Vet to Join Prospect Park Run for Charity

400 runners lace up to preserve a safe-haven for at-risk Jewish youth

By [C. Zawadi Morris](#) | [Email the author](#) | April 2, 2011



Tomorrow, on Sunday, April 3, at 9:00 am in Prospect Park, 400 New Yorkers will put on their sneakers, lace up and prepare to run three miles around the park to save [Our Place](#), a drop-in-center that offers counseling, camaraderie, a home-cooked meal and referral services for troubled Jewish youth.

The 5K race was organized to raise funds to keep the program's doors open. Since 1998, Our Place, located in Midwood, has been a beloved safe-haven for at-risk teens and a place for them to break addictions to alcohol and drugs.

The non-profit program takes in Jewish youth from anywhere in the city-- those who just needs a place to go and a listening ear.

Current members and alumnus of Our Place are passionate about the program. In fact, several of its participants credit Our Place with saving their lives.

One of those people is Sam, a 500-pound man who lives in a youth shelter and visits Our Place regularly. When Sam heard about the race, he said, "I'm in!"

Though his weight has prevented his participation in other Our Place events, he told organizers, "If it takes me all day, I will crawl to the finish line, or if need be, walk cross-country in order to garner support and donations to keep Our Place going."

Aron Greenstein, who also credits Our Place with saving his life, told his grandfather, Avraham Silverman, about the 5K race and fundraiser.

"I am coming," said his Silverman, a World War II Veteran whose leg was recently amputated. "I understand what this run stands for, and I want to be counted."

The young Greenstein will push his grandfather through the 5K race in a wheelchair:

"As soon as I got a chance, I worked out the details," said Greenstein. "And with some assistance and wholesome cold drinks, I'm looking forward to pushing him over the finish line."

The race, scheduled for an 8:30 a.m. send off and a 9 a.m. start, will begin at the runner's path, about 200 feet from the entrance to Prospect Park at Empire Blvd. and Flatbush Avenue.